

**PERCEIVED RELATIONAL SUPPORT AS DETERMINANT OF  
ENTREPRENEURIAL READINESS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN  
COLLEGES OF EDUCATION SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA**

**BY**

**Salami, Sarafadeen Segun**  
**Department of Educational Management and Counselling (Business Education Unit)**  
**Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin**

**Dr. Lawrence Femi Ademiluyi**  
**Department of Business and Entrepreneurial Education,**  
**Kwara State University, Malete**

**Dr. Ngozi Bibiana Nwabuo**  
**Department of Business and Entrepreneurial Education,**  
**Kwara State University, Malete**

**&**

**Prof. G. T. Oladunjoye**  
**Department of Business and Entrepreneurial Education,**  
**Kwara State University, Malete**

**Abstract**

*The study was carried out to determine the perceived relational support as determinant of entrepreneurial readiness of business education students in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. To achieve the objectives of the study, 2 research questions were raised and answered while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational research design. The population for the study consisted of 6,929 business education students. Proportional sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of 693 respondents. The questionnaire was face and content validated by 3 experts from the Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education, Kwara State University, Malete. Cronbach Alpha method was adopted to ensure reliability of the instrument with the coefficient of  $r = 0.96$ . The questionnaire was administered on 693 respondents out of which 673 were retrieved from the respondents indicating 97% level of retrieval. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer data related to research questions while *t*-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used to test the null hypotheses formulated. The findings of the study revealed that business education students' perceived relational support is moderately high in relation to their entrepreneurial readiness and relationship was found between business education students' perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that students should develop good bonds within the family setting and at the same time government should re-orientate parents to assist the young graduates when the need arises.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Relational Support, Business Education and Readiness

## **Introduction**

The introduction of entrepreneurship into the curriculum of higher institutions in Nigeria is well explained by its significance in the amelioration of unemployment and encouraging self-reliance among youths in the country. Igbo (2009) points out that unemployment has resulted in a high incidence of various forms of social evils such as robbery, kidnapping, rapping, thuggery etc. Effiong (2011) indicates that entrepreneurship is capable of stimulating employment, employability and economic growth. Then, entrepreneurship could be termed as the instrument that could be employed by the government to prevent youth restiveness and actively engage them in one profit oriented activity or the others. According to Fatoki (2010) entrepreneurship is the capacity and willingness to undertake conception, organisation and management of a productive venture with all attendant risks while seeking profits as a reward.

Evidence has shown the commitment of government in setting entrepreneurial path in the socio-economic life of Nigerian youths. Among the entrepreneurship programs established by the government are National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin), Npower Nigeria etc. The central aim of establishing all these programs is to address the challenge of the youth restiveness and enhance their entrepreneurial readiness. Readiness is a psychological intent which arouses individual inclination to display certain behaviour. Entrepreneurial readiness is a mentality-built capacity towards being an entrepreneur. According to Ayobami and Ofoegbu (2011) entrepreneurial readiness is the interest to engage in entrepreneurial activity which involves inner guts, desire and the feeling to be independent. Carsrud and Brannback (2009) emphasize that entrepreneurial readiness depends on the mindset (inclination) of youth towards entrepreneurial activities. This could be inferred that the potential would-be entrepreneurs are more likely to have a positive mindset towards entrepreneurial activities if they feel they were ready and have the ability to be successful in the entrepreneurial venture. Also, entrepreneurial readiness can be defined as the confluence of a set of personal traits that differentiates individuals with readiness for entrepreneurship as especially competent to observe and analyse their environment in such a way that they channel their highly creative and productive potentials, so they may deploy their capability to dare and need for self-achievement (Coduras, Saiz-Alvarez, & Ruiz, 2016).

The concept of readiness is expatiated in the theory of Planned Behaviour propounded by Ajzen (1991). The theory indicates that inclinations are understood to be stimulus of a specific behaviour. Thus, the stronger the inclination to a specific behaviour, the more the possibility it will be demonstrated. It could, therefore be inferred that the stronger the readiness to start entrepreneurial activities, the more likely it is to carry out business activities. A central question arose is what factors determine entrepreneurial readiness among business education students? This paper focuses on perceived relational support as one of the factors that could determine the entrepreneurial readiness of Business Education students in Colleges of Education South-West Nigeria.

Perceived relational support refers to the potential entrepreneur's belief and expectations about the support he/she will receive from groups to which he/she belongs: Parents, siblings, spouses are other reference groups in the case of setting up a business or going self-employed. Support

and encouragement from family members, relatives and friends have been shown to be associated with the development of entrepreneurs (Baughn, 2006). Social support has been considered an important variable in the explanation of a person's behaviour. Nanda and Sorenson (2009) indicate that family and friends are the people with the greatest influence on individual career choice because they are considered as fund providers and role models. The authors further state that the roles of friends and role models are prominent in influencing the decision to become an entrepreneur. In the view of Postigo (2006) role models often provide the necessary information, guidance, set a good example and support. He further said that by having a good example and support, the students are more prone and confident to become an entrepreneur. Therefore, the support of family and friends is likely to affect one's career selection. If someone knows that there will be such type of support when he starts a business, he might be encouraged to choose an entrepreneurial career. From the empirical evidence of Mustapha and Selvaragu (2015), it was indicated that family influence has a positive and significant influence on the students' readiness to become entrepreneurs.

However, there are many factors that influence one's readiness to become an entrepreneur. Abdulwahab (2016) expresses that some become entrepreneurs because they are unemployed, others are downsized or have their jobs outsourced. Individuals become entrepreneurs for more economic stability and to help stimulate the economy. These individuals can be driven to become entrepreneurs for the sense of independence, a family tradition of entrepreneurialism, to gain status and because they want to create new products and services. Discrimination based on gender and race can also contribute to the desire to become an entrepreneur.

Gender is an important aspect of entrepreneurial readiness discussion. In the study of Delmar and Davidson (2000) it was reported that 67% of all business in Sweden was started by men, 28% by women and 5% by a joint venture between men and women. Also, Fridoline (2009) states that entrepreneurial undertakings are more related to male than to females, whereas percentage wise male counted for 55% of those who wanted to own their own business while the female was 34%. In the study of Jose-Luiz (2010) the women and men reported equal intentions to become entrepreneurs predicted from self-efficacy in terms of confidence in securing a new idea for a product or service, (coming up with a new idea, design a product or service that will satisfy customer needs. Hence, the current study aims at establishing Business Education Students perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness as well as the relationship that exist between them.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Realizing self-reliance as a solution to the youth unemployment problem, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduces entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of higher institutions' programmes as a deliberate effort to make Nigerian graduates to be job providers instead of being job seekers. Despite this effort, the unemployment problem still persists thereby leaving Nigerian youths hopeless. Recent statistics by the Trading Economy (2018) shows that the unemployment rate in Nigeria has reached 38%. The observation shows that many of youths including graduates of Business Education could not find a job or able to establish business despite being exposed to entrepreneurial education in the school and government entrepreneurship programmes after leaving the school. This could be attributable to students'

perception on the contribution of the relative settings towards the actualization of their business goal. Hence, there is the need to investigate the relationship of perceived relational support with entrepreneurial readiness of Business Education students in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness of Business Education Students in Colleges of Education, in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. level of Business Education students' perceived relational support in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria.
2. level of Business Education students' entrepreneurial readiness in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria.
3. Relationship between perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.
4. Differences in the male and female respondents on the entrepreneurial readiness of Business Education students in South-West, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of business education students' perceived relational support in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria?
2. What is the level of business education students' entrepreneurial readiness in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.
4. What is the difference in the male and female respondents on the entrepreneurial readiness of Business Education students in South-West, Nigeria.

### **Hypotheses**

Two null hypotheses were formulated for testing in this study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness of Business Education Students in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on the entrepreneurial readiness of business education students in South-West Colleges of Education, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 6,929 Business Education students from the 12 public Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. The proportional random sampling technique was adopted to obtain a sample of 693 respondents representing 10% of the total population. The instrument for data collection for the study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled: Perceived Relational Support and

Entrepreneurial Readiness Questionnaire (PERSERQ). The questionnaire contains 28 items with four sections (A-C). Section A dealt with demographic data of the respondents. Section B measured students' perceived relational support, Section C measured students' entrepreneurial readiness. Items in sections B-C were placed on a four-point rating scale of Very High Level (VHL), Moderately High Level (MHL), Moderately Low Level (MLL) and Very Low Level (VLL). The items were scored as follows: VHL= 4, MHL = 3, MLL = 2 and VLL= 1.

The instrument on the perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness of business education students was face and content-validated by 3 experts in the Business and Entrepreneurial Education Department, Kwara State University, Malete. The instrument was subjected to reliability test using Cronbach alpha method which was administered on a sample of 60 respondents outside the study area. The reliability test yielded a coefficient of 0.96. Data were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistics. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Decision Rule: The following boundary limits were used for item options of research instruments. Very High Level (3.50-4.00), Moderately High Level (2.50-3.49), Moderately Low Level (1.50-2.49), Very Low Level (0.0-1.49). For the hypotheses, if the observed p-value is less than the fixed p-value (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. On the other hand, if the observed p-value is greater or equal to the fixed p-value (0.05), the null hypothesis is accepted.

## Results

**Research Question One:** What is the level business education students' perceived relational support in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Perceived level of Relational Support of Business Education Students**

S/n	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	If I decide to be an entrepreneur, my family members will support me with an initial capital	3.43	0.78	MHL
2.	If I decide to be an entrepreneur, my friends will encourage me with useful advice	2.72	1.10	MHL
3.	My close associates and neighbour will patronise my business	3.42	0.69	MHL
4.	My business role models will assist me with proper counselling and guidance	3.42	0.67	MHL
5.	My family will support me in advertising my business	3.31	0.74	MHL
6.	My close associates will provide specialized skills to help me run my business	3.32	0.76	MHL
7.	I will successfully compete with others as my neighbours will constantly patronize me	3.32	0.76	MHL
8.	During times of emergency, my relatives will assist me	3.30	0.79	MHL
9.	My parents will allow me to use their vehicles for the delivery of my products	3.34	0.76	MHL
10.	My friends will provide assistance by advertising my business to others known to them	3.35	0.74	MHL
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>MHL</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The data presented in Table 1 reveals that all the items on perceived level of business education students' relational support is rated moderately high by the respondents. The means of all the items ranged from 2.72 to 3.43. All the 10 items in Table 1 have low standard deviation values ranging from 0.67 to 1.10 which signifies low variability of responses. In summary, Table 1 reveals that the perceived level of business education students relational support as being moderately high ( $\bar{x}=3.29$ ,  $SD=0.77$ ).

**Research Question Two:** What is the level of business education students' entrepreneurial readiness in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Perceived level of Entrepreneurial Readiness of Business Education Students in Colleges of Education**

S/n	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	My goal is to become an entrepreneur	3.61	0.64	VHL
2.	I am determined to create a business venture in future	3.54	0.61	VHL
3.	I prefer to be self-employed	3.43	0.71	MHL
4.	I prefer to take decisions on business matters, independently	3.44	0.73	MHL
5.	I can easily imagine many ways to satisfy a need	3.37	0.64	MHL
6.	I intend to start something that will be beneficial to others	3.47	0.73	MHL
7.	I intend to set up a new venture	3.48	0.67	MHL
8.	I have started getting information on my proposed business	3.34	0.66	MHL
9.	I will pursue my business goals despite any setback	3.36	0.74	MHL
10.	I see problems as opportunities for new business ideas	3.42	0.72	MHL
11.	I am determined to save part of my stipend to start a business upon graduation	3.43	0.62	MHL
12.	I am undergoing apprenticeship training in my proposed business.	3.30	0.76	MHL
13.	I feel I have the skills to start and run my own business venture	3.40	0.68	MHL
14.	I used to read business documentation for business ideas	3.36	0.73	MHL
15.	I listen to business news on account of understanding business trends	3.31	0.72	MHL
16.	I read the biography of successful businessmen/women to gain more knowledge about how they started and their challenges	3.37	0.72	MHL
17.	I attend a business gathering in an attempt to gain knowledge about the business establishment	3.26	0.82	MHL
18.	I pay more attention to entrepreneurship class, in preparation for my business establishment.	3.43	0.68	MHL
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>3.29</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>MHL</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2018



Table 2 reveals that all the items on perceived level of business education students' entrepreneurial readiness are rated moderately high except items 1 and 2 which were rated very high. Generally, the table shows that the students indicated a moderately high level for all the constructs in relation to their entrepreneurial readiness. This means that business education students in Colleges of Education, South West, Nigeria's entrepreneurship preparation level is moderately high. This is evident in the average mean and standard deviation scores of 3.29 and 0.79.

### Test of Hypotheses

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness of Business Education Students in Colleges of Education South-West Nigeria

**Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Perceived Relational Support and Entrepreneurial Readiness of Business Education Students in Colleges of Education, South-West Nigeria**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value	Remark
PRSupport	673	32.92	4.05	0.461	0.000	Sig
Entrepreneurial R	673	61.30	6.11			

**P<0.05**

The Pearson correlation coefficient  $r$  in table 3 indicates the response values of (0.461);  $p < 0.05$ . Hence, since  $p$ -value for the response is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, signifying that there is a significant relationship between perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness of business education in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents on the entrepreneurial readiness of business education students in South-West Colleges of Education, Nigeria.

**Table 4: Summary of t-test of the difference in the mean ratings of male and female Respondents on the entrepreneurial readiness level of business education students in South-West Colleges of Education, Nigeria**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	p-value	Decision
Male	314	61.43	4.45	0.51	671	0.61	NS
Female	359	61.19	6.64				

The analysis of data in Table 4 reveals that there are 314 male and 359 female students in the study. The Table shows the mean and standard deviation of male and female responses ( $\bar{x}=61.43$ ,  $SD=4.45$ ) and ( $\bar{x}=61.19$ ,  $SD=6.64$ ). There was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students of business education students on entrepreneurial readiness ( $t_{671}=P>0.05$ ). This, therefore, means that hypothesis two was accepted. This implies that male and female respondents do not differ in their responses regarding their entrepreneurial readiness level.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The result of the findings in Table 1 shows that the perceived level of relational support of business education students in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria is moderately high. Relational support refers to the approval and support from the family, friends and others to involve in entrepreneurial activities. The finding corroborates the earlier findings of Nanda and Sorenson (2009) who indicated that family and friends are the people with the greatest influence on individual career choice because they are considered as fund providers and role models. The authors further stated that the roles of friends and role models are prominent in influencing the decisions to become an entrepreneur. This view was supported by Postigo (2006) that role models often provide the necessary information, guidance, set a good example and support. He further said that by having a good example and support, the students are more prone and confident to become an entrepreneur.

The result of the findings of the study in Table 2 reveals that the level of entrepreneurial readiness of business education in Colleges of Education South-West, Nigeria is moderately high. This indicates that business education students show an inclination to engage in entrepreneurial activities upon their graduation. These findings are in line with findings of Leo (2009) who stated that entrepreneurial ideas begin with inspiration; intentions are needed for them to become manifest. Also, this finding is in support of Dell (2008) and Dhow and Walter (2010) who indicated that entrepreneurial intention is the willingness of individuals to perform entrepreneurial behaviour, to engage in entrepreneurial action, to be self-employed, or to establish a new business.

The study found a significant relationship between the perceived relational support and entrepreneurial readiness of business education students in Colleges of Education in South-West, Nigeria. From the empirical evidence of Mustapha and Selvaragu (2015), it was indicated that family influence has a positive and significant influence on the students' intention to become entrepreneurs. The study also reveals a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the entrepreneurial readiness of business education students in Colleges of Education, South-West, Nigeria. Finding is in line with earlier findings of Jose-Luiz (2010) who indicates that the women and men reported equal intentions to become entrepreneurs predicted from self-efficacy in terms of confidence in securing a new idea for a product or service, (coming up with a new idea, design a product or service that will satisfy customer needs. The finding of the is in contrary to the findings of Fridoline (2009) who states that entrepreneurial undertakings are more related to male than to females, whereas percentage wise males counted for 55% of those who wanted to own their own business while the female was 34%.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that relational support and entrepreneurial readiness perceived level of business education students in Colleges of Education students in South-West Nigeria is moderately high. The study has shown that the family and friends support will also go a long way in assisting the students to realize their business goal after leaving the school. The study also concluded that there is a significant relationship between perceived relational support with entrepreneurial readiness of business education students in Colleges of Education, South-West, Nigeria. It is therefore important to state that the relational support is



important to the entrepreneurial readiness of business education students in Colleges of Education, South-West, Nigeria. The study also revealed that the difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents was not significant. Generally, the study concluded that the contributions of the independent variable in predicting entrepreneurial readiness of business education students in Colleges of Education, South-West, Nigeria is significant. It is therefore important to state that relational support is a very good predictor of entrepreneurial readiness. On this basis, family and role models are prominent in influencing the decision to become an entrepreneur.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school management most especially at colleges of education level should re-orientate parents on their roles towards the need to provide necessary assistance for young graduates to partake in entrepreneurship activities.
2. The business educators should create awareness for the students on the benefits of being good to the family and friends in terms of assistance which could be derived from them when preparing for business activities.
3. Relative and family support have been identified as significant factor in the study, therefore, there is a need for the students to develop good rapport within the relative setting as to take such advantage when planning to start a business of their own after graduation.

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